



June 1, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Merkley,

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), we would like to thank you for circulating the Dear Colleague letter in support of the Nursing Workforce Development Programs (Title VIII, Public Health Service Act) in Fiscal Year 2018. As the national voice for baccalaureate and graduate nursing education, the AACN represents over 800 schools of nursing that educate more than 477,000 students and employ over 19,000 full-time faculty members. These institutions are responsible for educating our nation's registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, nurse faculty, and nurse researchers.

As you are well familiar, for over 50 years, Title VIII has helped to build the supply and distribution of qualified nurses to meet our nation's healthcare needs. Last year alone, over 61,000 individuals were supported through Title VIII. These programs bolster nursing education at all levels, thereby supporting future nurses who are essential to meeting healthcare demands. This serves as an investment in the health of our nation.

The continued funding for Title VIII programs is crucial to our member schools across the country whose students depend on financial support, such as loan repayments and scholarships. Moreover, Title VIII helps connect nursing professionals to communities most in need of high-quality services.

We thank you for your steadfast support of the profession and our patients as the Co-Chair of the Senate Nursing Caucus, and we commend your commitment to working in a bipartisan manner to ensure future sustainability of these programs. If our association can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact AACN's Director of Government Affairs, Lauren Inouye, at Linouye@aacn.nche.edu, or 202-463-6930 ext. 271.

Sincerely,

Juliann G. Sebastian, PhD, RN, FAAN
AACN Board Chair

Deborah E. Trautman, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and Chief Executive Officer

ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING